

Pål Kolstø. A mass for a heretic? The controversy over Leo Tolstoi's Burial.
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A MASS FOR A HERETIC?

The controversy over Leo Tolstoi's Burial

When Leo Tolstoi emerged as a religious teacher in the 1880s, taking a sharply polemical stance against the Orthodox faith he had been raised in, the Russian church was at a loss to find effective and appropriate ways to react. Various objectives and concerns conflicted with each other, prompting the prelates to take several initiatives, though at cross-purposes. On the one hand, to the very end the church hoped that it might be possible to bring the prodigal son back home. Tolstoi had made a number of spectacular spiritual *volte faces* earlier in his life, and it could not be excluded that an additional *metanoia* might bring him to his senses. A number of Orthodox writers drew a parallel between the transformation of Saul the persecutor into Paul the apostle, on the one hand, and a future conversion of Tolstoi on the other.¹ In fact, in the course of his tortuous spiritual journey Tolstoi had at least once, in the years 1877–1879, made strenuous efforts to live and believe like an Orthodox faithful. On that occasion he had failed, perhaps, many Russians vainly hoped, as a result of insufficient spiritual guidance. The fact that Tolstoi several times visited the Optina Pustyn' monastery and looked up the famed *startsy* there, also after his break with the church, was taken as a sign that his soul might not be irredeemably lost after all. Over the last thirty years of Tolstoi's life, even while he lay on his deathbed, church dignitaries tried to gain access to the famous writer, to admonish and counsel him, hoping to bring him back to the narrow path.

But while they were engaged in this Sisyphean enterprise a steady stream of ever new anti-Orthodox pamphlets emanated from Iasnaia Poliana spreading the Tolstoyan heresy all across Russia. Even more important than the missionary efforts to convert Tolstoi, therefore, was the necessity to contain, and, hopefully, extinguish, this spiritual plague. In order to achieve this aim Orthodox writers wrote literally hundreds of apologetic and polemical books and pamphlets, none of which, however, seem to have made a very deep impression on the Russian public.²

Then, on 25 February 1901, the Holy Synod promulgated a public statement (*poslanie*) ‘On count Lev Tolstoi’ condemning the Tolstoyan heresy in no uncertain terms, to be read aloud from the ambo of the Uspenskii cathedral in St. Petersburg, and later in all Russian churches. This statement is without comparison the most famous document in the twisted history of the Russian church’s counteroffensive against Tolstoyanism and clearly expresses the dual-track strategy of the Church in its treatment of the Tolstoyan heresy. Its purpose, as it is explained in the opening paragraph, was ‘to protect the children of the Church from a baneful stumbling block (*soblazn*)’. At the same time, the church wanted ‘to bring to their senses those who have lost their way, *and in particular count Tolstoi himself*’.³ In themselves, neither of these objectives could be regarded as spiteful or vindictive, but the concluding paragraphs of the document, however, was widely interpreted as just that:

The church no longer regards him as one of its members, and it cannot do so unless he repents and restores his fellowship with it. This we testify before the entire church, to support those who walk on the path of righteousness and to admonish those who stray from it, in particular, in order once more to reprove

count Tolstoi himself. Many of those nearest to him, who have remained true to their faith, contemplate with anguish the prospect that he could end his days devoid of faith in Our Lord and Christ Our Saviour. In such a case, he will have spurned the benedictions and prayers of the church and all and every communion with it.⁴

While this message was presented in a verbose and roundabout language, its practical conclusion was nevertheless clear enough to be understood by those whom it concerned: no requiem mass—whether *otpevanie*, *panikhida* or *pominovenie*—could be performed after Tolstoi's death unless he repented.⁵

To withhold the sacraments from an individual was regarded as tantamount to denying him the bliss of Heaven after death.⁶ While the *poslanie*, contrary to received opinion, formally was not an official excommunication, the wording, the circumstances, and the timing of its publication created the definite impression that that was just what it was after all.⁷ The requiem ban pronounced by the Holy Synod over Tolstoi unleashed a protracted and at times convulsive debate which agitated the Russian public for an entire decade before he died and continued a good three years afterwards as well. The debate vividly illustrates the enormous difficulties the church experienced in communicating its message in the contemporary world. Since the decision on the requiem, as it turns out, was taken without consultation with the state authorities it also sheds some interesting light on church-state relations in late tsarist Russia.

The requiem debate has by and large been ignored by Tolstoi scholars in both Russia/ the Soviet Union and in the West. While most aspects of the circumstances surrounding Tolstoi's death and burial has been minutely chronicled, the involvement of the church has

been generally overlooked or mentioned in a few passing sentences only. The intense predicament in which the church found itself during Tolstoi's agony at the Astapovo railway station has been poorly understood. Thus for instance, Tolstoi's otherwise eminent biographer A.N Wilson, as we shall see, gets it all wrong when he claims that "in spite of the fact that Andrei Tolstoi had pleaded with the Bishop of Tula to allow them a full Orthodox funeral, permission for this was forbidden by the Church authorities".⁸ The present article attempts to fill this lacuna in the scholarship of Tolstoyology as well as in the history of the early 20th century Russian church.

THE BACKGROUND

At the turn of the century the Russian church was hard pressed from several quarters. A number of new and old sects made strong inroads among the Orthodox peasantry, while revolutionary atheism led astray the scions of the uppers classes.⁹ This created a kind of siege mentality among many members of the Church. They felt that they were fighting on two fronts simultaneously, striving desperately to hold on to the broad masses, on the one hand, and to save the souls of the intelligentsia, on the other. In this situation they could take some comfort from the fact that their two main adversaries—the sectarians and the revolutionary atheists—did not co-operate much with each other.¹⁰ The entrance of Tolstoi on the scene, however, severely aggravated the situation.

Tolstoi's socio-religious teaching combined elements of both sectarianism and revolutionary agitation, and for that reason he was soon perceived as a first order ideological opponent of the Church, more formidable than most ordinary sectarians and

revolutionaries. Fairly soon after the publication of *What I believe* in 1884, Church journals began to issue nervous warnings against the new heresiarch. In 1886 an Orthodox author drew parallels between Tolstoyanism and the new fast-growing sect of Stundism: “Look how fast Stundism is growing! How many of the children of the Orthodox Church it has torn away from their Mother over the last two-three years! And Stundism did not start with such an arresting authority as our highly praised writer, count L.N. Tolstoi.”¹¹ The next year an Orthodox priest concluded that Tolstoyanism was spreading over the Russian lands “with the speed of an epidemic, threatening to destroy everything that Russians regard as sacred, intimate and dear”.¹²

Tolstoi was a world famous novelist and capable of formulating his pernicious message in a much more elegant language than most heterodox preachers. He could therefore appeal to social groups that normally would not be attracted to sectarianism. In 1897 the Third All-Russian Congress of Home Missionaries in Kazan’ devoted particular attention to this new heresy. Having listened to a number of reports from various dioceses about the growth of the Tolstoyan movement, the congress adopted a resolution to the effect that

Tolstoyanism preaches heretical anti-Christian ideas about religion. It condemns the Church in the same way as Stundism does. Politically, this teaching contains criminal anti-state tendencies (under the cover of religion). This makes it a religious-social sect. In order to combat it, spiritual admonitions do not suffice; also determined governmental actions are required to limit the damage.¹³

This was a clear attempt to engage the secular authorities more actively in the struggle against this new spiritual adversary. A participant at the congress, archimandrite Tikhon, went even further and insisted that “Tolstoyanism is more dangerous for the state than for the Church”. Indeed, he claimed, in its social teaching it was more threatening than “even the most undisguised anarchism”.¹⁴

The problem for the Church, however, was that few people in the tsarist state apparatus shared this view. In 1892 it was rumoured that the Synod wanted to issue an official condemnation of Tolstoi, but if this was true, the plans came to naught. According to one Soviet researcher, this was because the tsar would not have it: “Alexander III kept his promise not to ‘add to Tolstoi’s fame the wreath of martyrdom.’”¹⁵ In 1897 the former revolutionary and staunch monarchist Lev Tikhomirov wrote that in court circles and the government “one can frequently hear arguments such as this: ‘with regard to the *intelligenty* it is preferable that they make fools of themselves in Tolstoyan colonies than engage in political conspiracies’.”¹⁶ While the church leaders tried to draw the attention of the tsarist state to the subversive potential of Tolstoyan *anarchism*, most state leaders focussed on and took comfort in Tolstoi’s *pacifism*.

Thus, despite the prodding of the Home Missionaries and other clericals the state authorities did little to combat Tolstoyanism. They harassed many of Tolstoi’s disciples, but left the fountainhead of this new ‘sect’ in peace. The archives, it is true, show that a police agent monitored Tolstoi’s movements in Moscow from 7 to 12 February 1897.¹⁷ However, even most of the surveillance of the famous writer seems to have been conducted by men of the church. The Bishop of Tula, for instance, received reports from the priest in the Iasnaia Poliana village which he passed on to his ecclesiastical superiors in St.

Petersburg. In his annual report from 1899 the bishop announced that the count no longer infected the peasants with his subversive ideas and had instead cloistered himself in his study.¹⁸ The circumstance that Tolstoi might possibly do more damage in his study than among the peasants does not seem to have occurred to the bishop. Seated at his desk at Iasnaia Poliana the recluse was most likely busy writing the sharply anticlerical novel *Resurrection*.

It is against this background that the decision to promulgate a *poslanie* against Tolstoi in 1901 must be seen. Soviet scholarship has unanimously insisted that the initiative to this document came from the tsarist regime or at the very least was a decision taken jointly by church and state authorities.¹⁹ The motive behind it was allegedly political and not religious. Thus, for instance, in a preface to a Soviet monograph devoted to this issue, the renowned Tolstoi specialist Lidiia Opul'skaia in 1978 claimed that

by 1901 open persecution of Tolstoi had become an urgent matter since after 1899 a revolutionary situation had arisen in the country. Russia and her people were moving fast towards its first revolution. Fear of the revolution forced the tsarist government to throw itself from one senseless action to another.²⁰

This version, however, is not supported by the available evidence, in fact, not even by the book Opul'skaia was prefacing. This book states plainly that "the initiative to the excommunication was taken by [presiding member of the Synod] metropolitan Antonii".²¹ Its author, however, along with all other Soviet researchers, fails to mention the actual incidence which prompted the hierarch to take this action, even though it is clearly stated in

the documents they quote. The reason for this omission seems clear: it demonstrates beyond any doubt that the *poslanie* was a defensive measure to stem what the hierarchy saw as the creeping influence of Tolstoyanism among members of his own clergy.

At a meeting of the Petersburg Religious-Philosophical Society on 6 February 1901 a radical Petersburg priest, Grigorii Petrov, compared Tolstoi with the virtuous pagan Vergil who guided Dante, the Christian seeker of truth, through hell and purgatory and all the way to the gates of Heaven. By drawing this analogy the priest was in effect saying that Tolstoi was perhaps not a Christian himself, but his teaching did not harm the Christian faith in any way. On the contrary, Tolstoi was, perhaps in spite of himself, doing the work of God. Metropolitan Antonii was immediately informed about this by a senior official of the Holy Synod, who had been present at the meeting.²² Appalled that such flattering descriptions of one of the most ardent detractors of Orthodoxy could be made by a man of the church, he summoned father Petrov to his office on 10 February. Already the next morning Antonii wrote to procurator Pobedonostsev that “everyone in the Synod has reached the conclusion that it is necessary to publish a statement on Tolstoi in *Tserkovnye vedomosti*”.²³ The procurator gave his consent and the *poslanie* was produced in less than two weeks. According to an insider’s account, the tsar did not learn about this action until Pobedonostsev brought him a honorary copy of this official church journal. “Only at this stage were the higher spheres informed about this historical step which the Church leadership had undertaken on its own accord”.²⁴ Later, the church leaders had numerous occasions to regret their action.

The problem was not so much the description of Tolstoi’s religious teaching presented in the *poslanie*. It was an easy matter to establish that Tolstoi had renounced the

Orthodox faith since, in fact, he had repeatedly said so himself. The crux was the requiem ban. While it was clear that Tolstoi himself did not want any priest to officiate at his funeral, this circumstance by itself was not sufficient to put the issue to rest. As soon as he died, it would up to the bereaved to decide what should be done with his body. Both his wife and at least one of his sons were known to be Orthodox believers and were expected to press for a burial on consecrated ground. If they did, it would be up to the church to decide whether a requiem could be performed.

THE REQUIEM DEBATE – ANTE MORTEM

The requiem issue came to the fore in 1900, the year before the poslanie was promulgated. Tolstoi fell seriously ill, and it was feared that he might die. The Synod anticipated that some members of his family might ask for permission to give him a Christian funeral. The current presiding member of the Holy Synod, Ioannikii, sent a confidential circular to all Russian dioceses, informing them that the request should be granted only in the event of Tolstoi repenting and reconciling with the church prior to his demise. In the contrary case, the metropolitan maintained, a Christian burial of Tolstoi could lead the faithful into temptation.²⁵

The contents of the circular were soon publicly known and elicited strong reactions. Believers and non-believers alike reacted both against the secrecy with which it was surrounded as well as against the potential denial of a Christian burial to Leo Tolstoi. The circular was widely regarded as a kind of excommunication, albeit a most irregular one. An

anonymous pamphlet published abroad under the title *The synod avenges itself on Tolstoi with an Anathema* lambasted the circular and its authors.²⁶

The hierarchs realized that they would have to issue a public justification of their refusal to give Tolstoi an *otpevanie*.²⁷ The *poslanie* which was promulgated the next year was such a justification. In his letter to Konstantin Pobedonostsev on 11 February Metropolitan Antonii, who by this time had taken over as presiding member of the Synod after Ioannikii, explained that a public *poslanie* “will not be a judgment of a deceased person, as the confidential circular is being depicted, nor a censure against which the accused is unable to defend himself. Instead, it will be a ‘warning’ to a living person”.²⁸ Indeed, in an early draft of the *poslanie*, discussed by members of the Synod, the connection between the two documents was made quite explicit already in the title. In this version, the address was called “a *poslanie* to the children of the Orthodox church, [to notify them] that no *pominovanie* must be held over count Lev Tolstoi after his death.”²⁹ For reasons unknown the direct reference to the requiem ban was dropped from the title of the *poslanie* at a later stage.

The day after the publication of the *poslanie* Tolstoi’s wife, Sof’ia Andreevna, wrote four identical letters which she addressed to Konstantin Pobedonostsev and to the three metropolitan members of the Synod. She told them that the *poslanie* had filled her with boundless sorrow and indignation. The church, which she still belonged to, was in her opinion established by Christ the Lord in order to sanctify all significant moments in the life of man – birth, matrimony, and death, all sorrows and joys. But now the church had declared that it would withhold its blessings from her husband when he died, even though Christ has taught us that we shall love our enemies.

Whom do you want to punish? The departed one, who no longer can feel any pain, or his closest relatives, believers who stand around him? Is this meant as a threat, and if so, against whom or what?

Would it really be impossible for me to find a decent priest who will perform a *panikhida* over my husband and pray for him in the church, one who fears men no more than he fears the real God of love, or perhaps to find a “not so” decent priest, whom I could bribe handsomely to officiate?³⁰

Sof’ia Andreevna nevertheless concluded that she could do very well without such a mass. In no way did the eternal fate of Tolstoi depend on the decisions of men, it would be decided by the will of God alone.

Initially, metropolitan Antonii apparently intended to pass over the countess's letter in silence. It was soon, however, printed in several foreign newspapers and copies of it circulated in Russia as well. The reticence of the prelate was widely interpreted as a sign that he was stuck for an answer. One of many anonymous letters to end up in his letter box during those days claimed that “thousands of thinking people in Russia are expecting an answer from you in the press. If no reply is forthcoming, your silence will be regarded as additional confirmation of your feebleness and mendacity vis-à-vis God and society.”³¹

On 16 March, Antonii sat down to write. His reply to Sof’ia Andreevna was published in *Tserkovnyi vestnik* together with the countess’s letter.³² It was most unusual for a high Church dignitary to involve himself in a public dispute concerning a decision he

and his colleagues had made. This is an indication of the considerable problems of communication which the church experienced in its relation with the Russian public.

Antonii denied that the requiem ban should be seen as a threat of any kind. Furthermore, he agreed with the countess that it was one of the main tasks of the church to sanctify all solemn moments in the life of men, but he added that the church had never done so with regard to non-believers, heathens or blasphemers. While it is true that the love of God is limitless, this love does not forgive everything and everyone. Antonii cited Matt. 12,32 as biblical evidence that sin against the Holy Ghost will not be forgiven, either in this life, or in the next. Thus, if an Orthodox priest was to be bribed into officiating at a requiem mass for Tolstoi, this would be tantamount to a “criminal profanation of the holy ritual”, the metropolitan asserted. In addition, it would be an offense against the deceased, since Tolstoi on numerous occasions had explicitly asked not to be given a Christian burial.³³

If the metropolitan had hoped that his reply would put an end to this delicate matter, he miscalculated badly. In fact, his letter poured additional fuel on the debate. The correspondence between him and the countess was discussed in drawing rooms and at street corners all over Russia – though not in the secular press. The Minister of the Interior, Dmitrii Sipiagin, feared the worst and issued a general ban on any discussion of the *poslanie* in the secular press,³⁴ but this prohibition did not extend to the organs of the church itself. This circumstance meant the ecclesiastical journals and papers could dominate the printed requiem debate unchallenged.

As was to be expected, all who expressed their opinion in the religious press supported the metropolitan. Some of the articles, however, were so aggressively anti-Tolstoyan that Antonii possibly was more embarrassed than comforted by them. While his

own letter to the countess, some harsh words notwithstanding, had clearly been an attempt to calm the sentiments, some of his supporters, deliberately or inadvertently, did their utmost to raise the temperature to new heights. Many of them were anonymous.

A doctor from Moscow reminded the countess about Job's wife in the Old Testament: She had advised her husband to curse God and die (Job 2, 9).³⁵ An "Orthodox believer" insisted, in direct disagreement with the metropolitan, that the requiem ban should indeed be regarded as a threat: did not Sof'ia Andreevna know that the God of love is also the God of revenge? Tolstoi, this writer asserted, belonged to those whom Jesus condemned in Matt. 25,41: "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."³⁶

Antonii had no reason, however, to believe that such outpourings were typical reactions among the Russian public. He received clear indications that the private debate, which stirred emotions all over the country, was dominated by quite other viewpoints. As it was not possible to express these viewpoints in public several persons decided that they instead would convey their opprobrium of the metropolitan's action to him directly by post.

Among the letters to Antonii which are kept in the Saltykov-Shchedrin library in St. Petersburg, several touch upon the requiem question. The irreligious and anticlericals upbraided him, while most professing believers supported him. That was quite predictable. More disconcerting, therefore, from the bishop's point of view, was probably the fact that also some who shared the faith of the church took the side of the countess in this matter. The most interesting letter in this category was written by a retired naval officer, Ivan Pavlovich Iuvachev. Iuvachev was a man of letters, and had, over the years, contributed

several articles and travelogues to Orthodox journals. He was well read and apparently also versed in Greek.

As a sincere Orthodox believer, Iuvachev wrote, he rejected Tolstoi's ideas on the church, on the sacraments, etc. On the other hand, he could not but respect and love a man who obviously "hungers and thirsts for righteousness". This, however, was not the reason why he had come to the conclusion that a requiem mass over the great author ought to be allowed. Rather, he based his argument on a theological understanding of the Christian church. "As is known, our Orthodox church, in contrast to many other denominations, prays for the deceased, not asking whether or not they deserve to be accepted into the Heavenly Kingdom. This is one of the reasons why we love this church so much."

Iuvachev pointed to Jesus' healing of the lame in Matt. 9 (with synoptic parallels in Luke 5 and Mark 2): "When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'take heart, son; your sins are forgiven'". As Iuvachev pointed out, the Gospel is here talking not about "his" faith (*avtou*), but "their" (*avton*; All three versions of the miracle agree on this). This must mean that the faith of those who surround a stretcher – or a bier – is sufficient for God to forgive the sins of the person lying on it.³⁷

The metropolitan's trump card: Tolstoi's will

The main reason why the church did not listen to such voices but stood firm on the requiem ban was probably the one given by metropolitan Antonii in his letter to countess Tolstaia: Tolstoi himself had in no uncertain terms let it be known that he would very much resent the presence of any ecclesiastics at his funeral. Thus, starting from diametrically opposite

positions the church leadership and Tolstoi in this matter ended up with identical conclusions.

Tolstoi had discussed his funeral in his diary as early as in 1895, in a passage to which he would later refer as his “will”.

Bury me where I die. If it is in a city, let it be in the very cheapest graveyard and in the very cheapest coffin, such as beggars are buried in. Neither flowers nor wreaths should be placed upon it, and no speeches shall be said. If possible, let it also take place without any priest and *otpevanie*. However, if this is distressing for those who shall bury me, let it be done by the usual ritual, but as cheaply and simply as possible.³⁸

These lines both Sof’ia Andreevna and the metropolitan could in fact turn to their account. In his *Reply to the Synod*, however, published in 1901, Tolstoi gave a closer interpretation and sterner expression of his will.

In my will to my dear ones I have written that they shall not allow any representative of the church to be present when I die, and my dead body shall be removed as quickly as possible, without any adjurations or prayers, and as any other unpleasant and useless matter it shall be removed so that it does not interfere with the lives of those who live on.³⁹

These lines, an ecclesiastical author claimed, made it sound as if it were the habit of the priests to come running as soon as it was rumored that a person was in the throes of

death and besiege the deathbed.⁴⁰ No doubt, the Russian priests did not regularly evince such zeal, but they certainly did when Tolstoi was dying in 1910.

The news that Lev Tolstoi was nearing his end at the railway station in the provincial town of Astapovo in the Kaluga province in November 1910, triggered a hectic round of meetings in the Holy Synod. Its members convened for more or less continuous sessions and informal consultations from 3 through 7 November, sometimes both morning and evening. To some extent, this frantic activity was no doubt prompted by pressure from the secular Russian authorities. If the newspaper *Russkoe slovo* is to be believed, prime minister Petr Arkadievich approached the Synod leadership inquiring what the church intended to do in the event of the drama in Astapovo terminating in death. This inquiry led to a hastily convened extraordinary meeting of the Synod where Tolstoi's bishop, Parfenii of Tula, happened to be in attendance. At this meeting the Procurator of the Synod, Luk'ianov, raised the issue of giving Tolstoi a Christian burial. The bishops pointed to their *poslanie* from 1901 and added that since that document was issued Tolstoi had shown no signs of repentance.

Even so, they agreed, so many questions remained unanswered that the matter would have to be investigated further. It was therefore decided to send bishop Parfenii to Astapovo as an observer on behalf of the Synod. In addition, a telegram was dispatched to the bishop of Kaluga, in whose diocese Tolstoi now lay, instructing him to make a last-ditch attempt to elicit a change of heart from the great writer. This mission the bishop of Kaluga passed on to the startsy of the nearby Optina Pustyn' monastery.⁴¹ In fact, the first stop on Tolstoi's "flight" from his family – which ended in Astapovo – had been at Optina.

He had not looked up any of the startsy while he was there, but it was rumored in the press that he had wanted to do so. What had kept him back was the knowledge that he was under interdict.⁴² Acting upon this information, the abbot of Optina, Varsonofii, together with a deacon named Panteleimon, took it upon himself to travel to Astapovo in person to inquire into the causes of Tolstoi's abortive visit to the monastery. The abbot arrived in the evening of 5 November, but Tolstoi's daughter Alexandra, who kept vigil over the sick man, denied him entrance.⁴³

Bishop Parfenii, having a longer road to travel, arrived only after Tolstoi had died, on 7 November, at six o'clock in the morning.⁴⁴ In the meantime, metropolitan Antonii had sent a personal telegram to the patient, beseeching him to return to the church:

From the very moment when you broke with the church I have incessantly prayed that the Lord may lead you back to it. Perhaps He will soon summon you to His court, and I implore you now on your sickbed: be reconciled with the church and with the Orthodox Russian people. May the Lord bless and keep you. Metropolitan *Antonii*.⁴⁵

Perhaps more than anything else this telegram shows how much it meant to the church to find a way to be reconciled with Tolstoi. The metropolitan no doubt realized that he was investing very much of the prestige and authority of the church in this endeavor. His telegram might well be presented in the secular press as an importunate obtrusion, and, at the same time, such desperate entreaties to a man who had heaped merciless scorn on him and his church for decades might easily turn the metropolitan into a pitiable laughing stock.

The strong pressure coming from the secular authorities is probably not sufficient an explanation as to why he nevertheless persisted. Most probably the church leaders to the very end actually hoped – like Abraham "against all hope" (Rom. 4,18) – that a miracle might occur and their prayers would somehow be answered.

It is probable that pressure on the church to be reconciled with Tolstoi emanated not only from the government and the prime minister, but also from the tsar himself. *Russkoe slovo* asserted that there was deep concern "at the highest levels" over the embarrassing situation which the *poslanie* had created. "According to certain rumors the Synod was informed that a positive solution – *no matter how* – on the question of revoking Tolstoi's excommunication was highly desired."⁴⁶ This information is corroborated by Lev Tikhomirov who had good connections in the inner court circles as well as among the church leadership. On 8 November, Tikhomirov commented in his diary upon a conversation he had had the day before with bishop Parfenii. The bishop had confided that the tsar himself had expressed an impassioned desire to have Tolstoi reinstated in the fellowship of the church on his deathbed. Parfenii also claimed that the members of the Synod had pledged to do their utmost to accede to the wish of his majesty in this matter.

In Tikhomirov's personal opinion the Synod would "spit itself in the face" if it gave in to this pressure. Indeed, it would reveal such fatal weakness in the church leadership that it might lead to a schism, he believed.⁴⁷ This diagnosis, while probably grossly exaggerated, is nevertheless an indication of the strong emotions which the burial controversy stirred up.

The pressure to give Tolstoi an Orthodox funeral, however, stemmed not only from without, but also from within the church itself. Influential clergymen were very willing

indeed to officiate over the writer's dead body if given permission so to do. According to bishop Antonii (Khrapovitskii, 1864–1936),⁴⁸ a group of priests during these fateful November days approached the Synod and suggested that they could perform a burial service at Tolstoi's funeral using another ritual than the one ordinarily used.⁴⁹ The ritual they had in mind was *Sviatyi Bozhe* which was used when a member of a non-Orthodox (Western) denomination was buried on a Russian Orthodox graveyard. This ritual had been instituted in 1797 to provide for all the non-Russian Christian officers who served in the tsarist army and died on Russian soil. These were persons who, while not followers of the true faith, nevertheless "adhered to the teachings of the Gospel, and put their trust in Christ the Lord, the Savior of Mankind".⁵⁰ The *Sviatyi Bozhe* ritual was still in use at the time of Tolstoi's death, indeed, it had been reconfirmed and reformed as late as in 1904 and found an ever wider application.

The group of clergymen apparently reasoned that interring Tolstoi with the rites of *Sviatyi Bozhe*, the famed writer could be given a Christian burial while conveniently bypassing the thorny issue of his relationship to the Orthodox church. This suggestion, however, was at the very best questionable and the political benefit to be drawn from it most uncertain. Theologically, to do so might leave the impression that the Russian church put Tolstoyanism on a par with Catholicism and Lutheranism.⁵¹ In addition, even if the church by choosing this solution could no longer be accused of "punishing" the deceased heretic, it would immediately face another accusation from the opposite side, that of trying to make political capital out of him. Indeed, it seems that whatever the Russian church leadership did or failed to do, it would be pilloried all over the globe as a gang of callous, self-righteous bigots. They were clearly in a no-win situation.

While the available evidence is inconclusive, it appears that the Synod seriously debated the *Sviatyi Bozhe* ritual, seeing it as a straw to cling to. A commemorative book on *The last Days of Tolstoi* published shortly after the writer's death claims that a decision was indeed made in the morning session of 7 November to settle for this compromise solution. The reason why it was nevertheless not implemented was that Stolypin at three p.m. the same day received a telegram from the governor of Riazan', Prince Obolenskii, stating that Tolstoi's family had decided to perform the funeral in accordance with the dead man's own prescriptions. In other words, the close relatives were requesting that no religious observances should be made over the coffin.⁵²

The editors of *The last Days of Tolstoi* do not say how they acquired this piece of information. The preface only states that the material printed in the book had been culled from various newspapers and journals, and verified as much as this had been feasible.⁵³ As far as I can see, this information has neither been referred to nor commented upon in any later accounts of Tolstoi's death, either in the Soviet Union, or in the West. In my view, however, the episode merits some attention. The *Sviatyi Bozhe* debate is an indication that there was far greater confusion and vacillation within the Church leadership than has usually be assumed. Outwardly it might seem as if the Synod retained a consistent and unwavering attitude on the question of Tolstoi's burial, never deviating from its 1901 statement, but this appearance may well be deceptive.

The fact that detailed reports from the confidential deliberations of the Synod could be printed in *The last Days of Tolstoi* was in itself not very sensational. Leakages from the highest organs of the church were common: frequently indiscretions resulted in news stories in the Russian press. Even though the *Sviatyi Bozhe* decision is not directly

confirmed by independent sources, it is nevertheless given some credence by the testimonies of Lev Tikhomirov and Antonii Khrapovitskii. Bishop Antonii explained that the proposal of the clerical group was turned down “as it in all likelihood would not have been accepted by the relatives”.⁵⁴

The attitudes of the Tolstoi family on the requiem issue had for a long time been uncertain. Rumors insisted that certain relatives had asked permission of the Synod to have an Orthodox ritual performed by the grave.⁵⁵ Highly placed persons of authority believed in the veracity of these rumors. A Ministry of the Interior official, N.P. Kharlamov, sent a telegram from Astapovo to his superiors in Moscow at twelve-thirty p.m. on the day of Tolstoi's death. He informed them that “the family desires a church burial (*Tserkovnoe pogrebenie*).” On the basis of this telegram his superior, P.G. Kurlov, sent a message to the governor of Riazan’, instructing him that the police authorities should not interfere in the event of a priest wanting to perform *panikhida* over Tolstoi. If such an eventuality did arise, however, the priest would have to notify the police authorities in advance about his intentions, “lest the *panikhida* turned out to be a disguised attempt to organize an antigovernment demonstration.”

The fear that radicals would try to exploit Tolstoi's demise for their own purposes, was a real one. Funerals had been turned into political manifestations before, and the Soviet scholar Boris Meilakh has documented that numerous strikes, mass meetings, and street demonstrations were indeed held in connection with Tolstoi's death. “Not only in Petersburg and Moscow, but also in other cities this movement took such large dimensions that the reactionary press began to talk about a repetition of the events leading up to 1905.”

⁵⁶ Tolstoi's funeral, however, passed in an orderly way.

Among Tolstoi's children only Andrei strongly favored an Orthodox funeral for his father, but in order to preserve peace with his siblings he did not press the issue.⁵⁷ Andrei had a long conversation with bishop Parfenii at Astapovo during which he told the prelate about his decision. Based on this and other conversations he had at Astapovo Parfenii wrote a comprehensive report to the Synod leadership. Already on the evening of 7 November a circular telegram was sent to all Russian dioceses confirming the requiem ban.⁵⁸ If any priest anywhere was approached by someone asking for a *panikhida* over "God's servant Lev", the priest should, contrary to regular custom, inquire about the surname of the deceased before granting the request. If the surname was "Tolstoi" no mass should be read.⁵⁹

POST MORTEM

Tolstoi's death caused widespread mourning all over Russia, and indeed all over the world. Escorted by 7000–8000 people the coffin was brought home to Iasnaia Poliana where he was put to rest in the park under some large oaks.⁶⁰ Tolstoi's will was respected. There were no priests present, either at his deathbed, or at the funeral, no wax candles, crosses or icons. The mourners sang *Vechnaia pamiat'*, a hymn which is sung as part of the Orthodox funeral ritual, but which nevertheless was regarded as a philosophically neutral way to part with the great writer. Tolstoi was the first public figure in modern Russian history to be buried without an officiating priest.⁶¹ Several Orthodox scribblers interpreted this as a fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy in 22,19: "He shall be buried with the burial of an ass."⁶²

From the very first moment Tolstoi's burial place became a popular destination for modern pilgrims. On his birthday the next year, 28 August, more than 300 persons congregated at his grave.⁶³ Shortly thereafter a small paragraph appeared in a number of Orthodox journals with the heading "A serpent on Tolstoi's grave". The anonymous writer claimed that during the commemoration on 28 August a boy had been bitten by a serpent which suddenly had appeared at the grave site. The poison had been transmitted to the chest and it was not known whether or not the boy had survived. The boy was the son of Tolstoi's biographer, the famous Tolstoyan Pavel Biriukov, it was asserted.⁶⁴

The magazine *Troitskoe slovo*, whose editor was known to have close connections to the Black Hundreds, explained the incident as a divine intervention.

Not a hair of your head will perish but for the will of God. This is the word of Christ the Savior himself. Could the evil reptile bite the innocent boy without God's permission? [...] If the boy has died, it means that God had taken him to Himself so that he shall be not be infected by the same poison as his parents. And for us all this shall be a lesson: Let us protect ourselves and our children from the pernicious teaching of the excommunicated heretic.

One-and-a-half years later an Orthodox writer insisted that, as a result of this incident (and, one may probably add, as a result of the interpretation it had been given in the Orthodox press), the number of visitors at Tolstoi's grave had decreased.⁶⁵

“Mr. X in the cassock” officiates

In 1912 the requiem mass entered a new phase. On 3 September of that year a professor at the Moscow theological academy, S. Glagolev, opined that while it had been a correct decision not to give Tolstoi a Christian burial when he died, the situation since then had changed. Perhaps the time was now right to say a *panikhida* over him.⁶⁶ Apparently unconnected to this suggestion, a man turned up in Iasnaia Poliana three months later, spurred by “God’s inspiration”, he claimed. The person presented himself as a priest of the Russian church and asked permission to celebrate a requiem mass over Tolstoi. The knowledge that such a “beautiful soul and good man as Tolstoi, who believed in both Christ and God”, should lay buried in the ground without the blessing of the church, filled him with deep anxiety.⁶⁷

The priest’s request was granted. First, he performed *otpevanie* by the grave site, then *panikhida* in Tolstoi’s bed chamber. Only Sof’ia Andreevna, Tolstoi’s last secretary Valentin Bulgakov, and four more persons were present. The same evening the priest moved on. Sof’ia Andreevna described him as “an energetic and wise priest, 27 years of age”.⁶⁸ To Bulgakov he had presented himself as Grigorii Lavrentevich Kalinovskii.⁶⁹

Sof’ia Andreevna had hoped that the incident could be kept secret, but the press soon got hold of the story. On 21 December, the journalist Aleksandr Savvich Pankratov in *Russkoe slovo* wrote a short sardonic article about the occurrence. He doubted whether “Mr. X in the cassock” really was an ordained priest, he could just as easily be a dressed-up lackey or barber. In any case, his action revealed deep ignorance about canonical law as well as contempt for the Holy Synod. According to Pankratov it was “utterly absurd” to perform *otpevanie* two years after a funeral, over a person who had been expelled from the

church and who, to cap it all, had explicitly asked to be buried without Orthodox ritual. The fact that the priest had not revealed his identity, Pankratov found quite natural. No criminal leaves his card on the site of his crime.⁷⁰

One week later Sof'ia Andreevna defended the incident in a letter to the editors in the same newspaper. She referred to Tolstoi's words in his diary of 1895 where he writes that if it means a lot to his family, they may give him an Orthodox funeral. His far harsher words in his *Reply to the Synod* she passed over in silence. She had had no religious scruples with the priest's proposal, she explained, quite the contrary:

How could I, a believer in the grace of the Church, feel anything but joy and gratitude toward a priest who understood that a sincere, fervent prayer for a dead man is an expression of love and Christian forgiveness and nothing else?⁷¹

It was true that the two masses had to be held in privacy, but also the first generation of Christians had had to hide from their enemies. After the masses the priest, in the words of the countess, had jubilantly exclaimed: "now Lev Nikolaevich is no longer a heretic, I have forgiven him his sins".

The Synod immediately rose to action, and, as on earlier occasions, commissioned bishop Parfenii of Tula to look into the matter. The bishop presented his report on 3 January 1913. He had not succeeded in establishing the identity of the anonymous priest. Parfenii therefore assumed that the two masses had been a veritable "mystification": Sof'ia Andreevna had been hoodwinked by an impostor. In spite of the conclusion of the bishop's

report the Synod held on to the hypothesis that the services had indeed been performed by a real priest.⁷²

Finally, the still anonymous priest sat down and justified his action in a letter to the editors in *Russkoe slovo*. In his view, an *otpevanie* may be conducted after the funeral just as well as under it. This was commonly done in several places in Siberia and in other remote regions where there are no priests. In any case, an *otpevanie* is not a travel document which the soul must present to the border guards when he crosses over from earth to heaven. It is a *prayer*, and it is never too late to pray. The church ought always and under all circumstances to pray for all sinners, even for the condemned. The early Christians had prayed for their executioners. The anonymous priest averred that he did not share Tolstoi's religious convictions, and had been motivated by no other reasons than that he, a sinner, would pray for another sinner.⁷³

The priest did not confirm Sof'ia Andreevna's startling assertion that he had done away with Tolstoi's heresy. Most Orthodox writers who condemned him in writing nevertheless assumed that it had indeed been his intention to do just that. The signature "B." in *Tserkovno-obshchestvennyi vestnik* believed that the priest had tried to turn the prayers of the Church into a magical formula that worked mechanically, independent of the will of man. The grace of God, however, cannot save by force. Intercession for the dead, therefore, makes sense only if those who live on can be sure that the dead one would have joined them in prayer if he had been still alive.⁷⁴ "B" had no doubt in his mind that the *otpevanie* had been an illegal act and that the priest would be severely punished if he were to be exposed.

Anton Vladimirovich Kartashev (1875–1960), professor of church history at St. Petersburg theological academy and four years later appointed Minister of Religious Affairs in the Provisional Russian government, commented upon the requiem mass for Tolstoi in *Russkoe slovo* in January 1913. Kartashev pointed out that the priestly ministry is not a personal spiritual power invested in the individual priest, but is an organ of the church. Religious rituals performed by a priest, therefore, make sense only when they are performed *on behalf of* the church. When a priest officiated by Tolstoi's grave without the blessing of his bishop, therefore, he could only act in the capacity of private person, with no ecclesiastical authority.⁷⁵

However, Kartashev also reminded his readers that Christ had given the church “a heroic, superhuman commandment”: pray for your enemies. In the opinion of the professor, therefore, a special ritual ought to be instituted for that purpose. “That would provide us with a remedy against the feeling of religious impotence which the men of the church are experiencing in the extraordinary situation which Tolstoi's death has brought about.”

CONCLUSION

In the requiem debate much was at stake for the church: its general reputation and theological trustworthiness as well as its relationship to the state authorities, to the general public, and to the faithful. The vacillating positions of the church leadership reflected all these concerns and pressures from all these quarters. As always in its attitude toward Tolstoi and Tolstoyanism, the church tried to pursue containment and damage limitation, on the one hand, and bring about Tolstoi's conversion, on the other.

In all likelihood, the Russian church did not anticipate the strength of the reaction which the *poslanie* of 1901 unleashed. As the ban did not extend to ecclesiastical organs the church could completely dominate the written debate until censorship was abolished in 1905. To no avail. This was a debate which the Church was doomed to lose, not because its arguments were necessarily any weaker, but because its opponent's general moral authority at the time was, rightly or wrongly, far stronger, in Russia as well as in the rest of the world. While Tolstoi had been lashing out at the Church for more than two decades in a long series of books and articles, the *poslanie* made it appear as if it were the church that was the attacker and Tolstoi the innocent victim of threats and intimidation. The fact that he was forbidden to defend himself in writing reinforced this impression.

The requiem ban, however, was apparently intended not so much as a punishment as an element in the Church's strategy to bring Tolstoi back among the faithful. Experienced confessors as they were, the prelates knew that people who feel that the end is approaching often seek the sacraments and the comfort of the church even when they have not done so before. The many attempts that were made to approach Tolstoi with admonitions and pleas right up to the very moment of his death indicate that the church leaders never relinquished this hope.

The chance that Tolstoi would renounce his heresy and return to the fold was perhaps not very great, to put it mildly, but on the other hand, if this strategy succeeded, the prize would be tremendous. It was expected that should this happen it would lead to the salvation not of one soul only, but of thousands: Considering Tolstoi's enormous moral authority and influence over the minds of people his conversion could start a veritable movement in the direction of the Church. As one author wistfully exclaimed:

What a bright day this will be for our country! For Tolstoi is the one who points the direction for and, indeed, leads the intelligentsia in our time. Scores of youth look up to and follow him whom they call their teacher and guide.⁷⁶

The crucial problem with this strategy, however, was: how should the Church react if the *poslanie* and the requiem ban did not produce the desired result? The prelates clearly had no alternative strategy to fall back on should the first one fail. The requiem ban functioned as a self-imposed limitation on the Church's future actions, a limitation which they could not ignore without "spitting itself in the face" as Lev Tikhomirov expressed it. Self-constraint may often be a rational strategy, but only when both sides want something which the other side can provide. The problem for the Russian church leaders was that while they desperately craved something from Tolstoi (his conversion) there was nothing the church could offer in which he was genuinely interested.

By promulgating the requiem ban, the Church painted itself into a corner. It linked its future actions to what Tolstoi did, and thus left the initiative to its adversary. It made itself a hostage to Tolstoi's spiritual development and could not change its decision unless he pronounced the two fateful syllables "*kaius*'," I repent. He did not.

Peter I's Spiritual Regulations of 1720 required the members of the Spiritual College – the forerunner of the synod – to take an oath in which they solemnly confessed that "the final judge of the this Spiritual College is the Monarch of All Russia himself, Our Most Gracious Sovereign",⁷⁷ This oath flagrantly contradicted canonical law and has often been regarded as the epitome of the abjectly submissive role of the church. It remained in force for almost 200 years, but on 23 February 1901 it was finally abolished—at the request of

the Synod.⁷⁸ Only two days later the Synod issued its public pronouncement on Tolstoi's teaching. This remarkable coincidence seems to have passed completely unnoticed. In this perspective we may see the Poslanie as the Russian church's first but unsuccessful attempt to test its ability to act independently in its own interests.

¹ Amicus, “Otkrytiia pis'ma k drugu intelligentu uvlekaiushchemusia ucheniem L.N. Tolstogo”, in *Missionerskoe obozrenie*, 1899, no. 2, 209; “Po povodu poslaniia Sviateishago Sinoda o grafe L've Tolstom”, in *Tserkovnye vedomosti* 1901, no. 16 pribavlenie p. 576; Father Ioann Solov'ev, “Poslanie Sviateishago Sinoda o grafe L've Tolstom. (Opyt raskrytiia ego smysla i znacheniiia)”, in *Vera i tserkov'* 1901, no. 4, 557.

² This literature stretched from highpitched aggressive pamphlets to detailed, erudite theological dissertations. See Pål Kolstø, *Sannhet i løgn. Lev Tolstoj og den ortodokse tro* (Truth in Falsehood: Leo Tolstoi and the Orthodox Faith) *Acta Humaniora* no. 14, (Oslo, 1997, 321-432.

³ Emphasis added.

⁴ "Opredelenie Sv. Sinoda ot 20–22 fevralia 1901 goda, s poslaniem vernym chadam Pravoslavnyiia Grekorossiiskiiia Tserkvi o grafa L've Nikolaeviche Tolstom," *Tserkovnye vedomosti* 1901 no. 8, 46–48.

⁵ *Pominovanie* is a short liturgy of intercession for one or more deceased which is read as a part of a regular service while a *panikhida* is a separate service. Strictly speaking, a *panikhida* is not a requiem since no Eucharist or other sacraments are celebrated. Although the term 'requiem' admittedly has a Catholic ring, I will nevertheless use this word since all possible substitutes, such as 'prayer for the departed' or 'commemorative service' are either long and cumbersome and/or have a Protestant ring which would be even more misleading.

Even though *otpevanie*, *panikhida* and *pominovanie* are three distinct services they were often confused with each other in the requiem debate which followed Tolstoi's death. It is also quite clear that insofar as one of them were to be permitted there was no longer any reason to deny the performance of any of the other two.

The Orthodox church does not have any detailed teaching on the purgatory, but nevertheless prays for the dead. *Panikhida* is usually read on the 3rd, 9th, and 40th day after the bereavement, and then once every year on the day of the departure of the soul. In addition, one may always come to church at any time and any place and ask for a *panikhida* to be performed. Whether or not the supplicant is related to the decease is immaterial.

⁶ It is true that Orthodoxy does not adhere to the Counter Reformation Roman Catholic dictum of “extra ecclesiam salus nulla”. Even so, the Eastern church also maintains that “membership in the church is the most important precondition for salvation”. See e.g. Father Konstantin Aggeev, *Po povodu tolkov v*

sovremennom obrazovannom obshchestve, vzbuzhdennykh poslaniem Sv. Sinoda o grafe L.Tolstom (Kiev, 1901), 16. The Orthodox church, moreover, rejects the Augustinian distinction between the visible and the invisible church, insisting that there is only one true church, itself.

⁷ On 11 February Metropolitan Antonii had written to Konstantin Pobedonostsev, the procurator to the Holy Synod, that the *poslanie* ought to be published “on 17 February, the day before the Feast of Orthodoxy”. Rosssiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv (RGIA), f. 1574, op. 2, d. 133, l. 2. On this feast day, which was had been instituted to celebrate the victory of Orthodoxy over iconoclasm in the 9th century, the Orthodox church condemned a long list of heretics of different hues. In the 18th century also rebels like Emel’ian Pugachev had been added to the list. The reason why the promulgation of the *poslanie* against Tolstoi was delayed for a week, from 17 February to 24 February, may have been due to second thoughts among the Synod members, opposition from various corners, or simply bureaucratic inertia. For a fuller discussion of this see Kolstø, *Sannhet i løgn*, 262-319.

⁸ A.N Wilson, *Tolstoy* (Harmondsworth, 1989), 517.

⁹ N. M. Nikol’skii, *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi*, 3rd ed. (Moscow, 1983), 319-435.

¹⁰ A Bolshevik expert on sects and sectarians, Vladimir Bonch-Bruевич, would a decade later claim that there was a considerable revolutionary potential among the sectarians. See e.g. his “Voina i sektanty” in *Sovremennyi mir* 1914, December, 102-115. His optimism, however, seems in a large degree to be based on wishful thinking.

¹¹ Ivan Palimpsetsov, “Neskol’ko slov po povodu ‘Ispovedi’ grafa L.N. Tolstago,” in *Strannik* 1886, no. 4, 803. Stundism was a new protestant creed introduced into Russia by German pietists in the eighteenth century. Originally Stundism was limited to the German settlements, but in the mid-nineteenth century Russian peasants were organizing Stundism among their own people. The word “Stundism” derives from the German word *die Stunde* that mean ‘hour’, in this context an hour devoted to prayer and Bible study. See Andrew Blane, “Protestant sects in Late Imperial Russia”, in Andrew Blane, ed., *The Religious World of Russian Culture*, (The Hague, 1975) Volume II, pp. 267-304, esp. pp. 270-71.

¹² Sergei Bogoslovskii, “Neskol’ko slov po povodu lzheucheniia gr. Tolstogo”, *Moskovskie cerkovnye vedomosti*, 1887, no. 3, 48-49.

¹³ “Tolstovstvo kak sekta”, in *Missionerskoe obozrenie* 1897, no. 9-10, 831.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ G.I. Petrov, *Otluchenie L'va Tolstogo ot cerkvi* (Moscow, 1978), 23.

¹⁶ Lev Tikhomirov, "Novye plody ucheniia grafa L. Tolstogo", in *Missionerskoe obozrenie* 1897, no. 1, 51.

¹⁷ V.I Sreznevskii, "L.N. Tolstoi v Peterburge v fevrale 1897 (po dannym Peterburgskogo Okhrannogo Otdeleniia)" in V.I Sreznevskii, ed., *Tolstoi. Pamiatniki tvorchestva i zhizni*, IV (Moscow, 1923), 191.

¹⁸ RGIA, f. 796, op. 442, d. 1811.

¹⁹ Boris Meilach, *Uchod i smert' L'va Tolstogo* (Moscow, 1979,) 2nd ed., 144; Semen Pozoiskii, *Lev Tolstoi i tserkov'* (Tula, 1963), 24-25; Petrov, *Otluchenie*, 34. The prevalent view among the Russian public at the time was that the *poslanie* was an act of vengeance from the procurator of the Holy Synod, Konstantin Pobedonostsev, for the way he had been smeared in *Resurrection* (in the easily recognizable figure of Toporov). Most Western commentators have accepted this popular explanation. See e.g. Henri Troyat, *Tolstoy* (Harmondsworth, 1980), 775; Wilson, *Tolstoy*, 458.

²⁰ Lidiia Opul'skaia, "Predislovie", in G.I. Petrov, *Otluchenie L'va Tolstogo ot tserkvi* (Moscow, 1978), 6.

²¹ Petrov, *Otluchenie*, 33.

²² Vasilii Skvortsov, "So skrizhalei serdtsa", in *Missionerskoe obozrenie* 1902, March, 243.

²³ RGIA, g. 1574, op. 2, d. 133, l. 1.

²⁴ Vasilii Skvortsov, as quoted in Petrov, *Otluchenie*, 32. If metropolitan Antonii perhaps was as weak-willed as most sources claim, some of his senior officials were not. In particular, Privy Councillor Vasilii Mikhailovich Skvortsov (1859-1932) seems to have played a pivotal role. He was the organizer of the Missionary Congress of 1897 which had first defined Tolstoyanism as a sect; he was Antonii's source of what Grigorii Petrov had said at the fateful meeting in Petersburg Religious-Philosophical Society, and was also commissioned by Pobedonostsev to write a confidential report outlining the main elements of Tolstoi's teaching (Petrov, *Otluchenie*, 32). After the event, Skvortsov wrote a number of articles justifying the Synod's action, and also edited a 600-page volume of documents and articles on the *otluchenie*, which ran through three editions. (*Po povodu otpadeniia ot pravoslavnoi tserkvi grafa L'va Nikolaevicha Tolstogo. Sbornik statei "Missionerskago obozreniia"* (3. enlarged ed.) (St.Pb., 1905.) For more details on Skvortsov's biography see Vladislav Maevskii, *Vnutrenniaia missiia i ee osnovopolozhnik* (Buenos Aires, 1954).

²⁵ RGIA, f.796, op. 182, d. 2433.

- ²⁶ *Sinod mstit Tolstogo anafemoi. Po povodu otluchenii* (Garouge-Genève: Elpidine, 1900).
- ²⁷ Nicolas Weisbein, *L'Evolution religieuse de Tolstoi* (Paris, 1960), 371.
- ²⁸ RGIA, f.1574, op. 2, d. 133, l. 2.
- ²⁹ RGIA, f.796, op. 182, d. 2433, l. 4.
- ³⁰ Sof'ia Andreevna Tolstaia, "Pis'mo k mitropolitu Antoniiu", reprinted in *Po povodu otpadeniia*, 67–69.
- ³¹ Publichnaia biblioteka imeni Saltykova-Shchedrina (PBSS), otdel rukopisei, StPb. Dukhovnaia akademiia, A I no. 289, letters to metropolitan Antonii (Vadkovskii), letter no. 39.
- ³² Antonii (Vadkovskii), "Otvēt na pis'mo grafini S.A.", reprinted in *Po povodu*, 69–71.
- ³³ Ibid., 69.
- ³⁴ "Pis'ma K.P. Pobedonostseva k redaktoru 'Tserkovnykh vedomostei' P. Smirnomu ob otluchenii Tolstogo ot cerkvi", in N.N. Gusev, ed., *L.N. Tolstoi*, Moscow: Letopisi gosudarstvennogo literaturnogo muzeia, 22, 1938, 209.
- ³⁵ F. N., "Po prochtenii pis'ma grafinii S.A. Tolstoi", in *Po povodu otpadeniia*, 80–81, on 81.
- ³⁶ Pravoslavnyi, "Otkrytoe pis'mo k grafini S.A.", in *Po povodu otpadeniia*, 72–79.
- ³⁷ PBSS, A I, no. 289, letter no. 18.
- ³⁸ Lev Tolstoi, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 90 tomakh (iubileinoe izdanie)* (Moscow, 1930–72), vol. 53, 14–15.
- ³⁹ Ibid., vol. 34, 248.
- ⁴⁰ "O vneshnykh obriadakh Pravoslaviia (Po povodu lzheucheniia grafa Tolstogo)," *Kormchii* 1902 no. 4, 55–57.
- ⁴¹ "Zasedanie Sinoda po povodu bolezni L.N. Tolstogo," *Russkoe slovo*, 5 November 1910; *Poslednie dni L'va Nikolaevicha Tolstogo* (St.Pb., 1910), 95–96.
- ⁴² "Sredi gazet i zhurnalov" *Novoe vremia* 11 November 1910; "Tolstoi v Optinoi Pustyni i Shamardine," *Tserkovnye vedomosti* 1910 no. 46 (appendix), 2013–2014. These rumors were in fact later confirmed by Dushan Makovitskii, Tolstoi's doctor, who accompanied him on his last journey. See Dushan Makovitskii, *U Tolstogo 1904–1910. Iasnopolianskii zapiski I–IV*, *Literaturnoe nasledstvo* nr. 90 (Moscow, 1979), vol. 4, 407–8.
- ⁴³ "Iz materialov o L.N. Tolstom," *Krasnyi arkhiv* 1923 (4) 338–364; Aleksandra L'vovna Tolstaia, "Ob ukhode i smerti L.N. Tolstogo," in Sreznevskii, *Tolstoi. Pamiatniki*, 181–82.

⁴⁴ "Ep. Parfenii o poezdke k L.N. Tolstomu," *Novoe vremia* 10 November 1910.

⁴⁵ *Smert' Tolstogo po novym materialam* (Moscow, 1929), 70.

⁴⁶ "Zasedanie Sinoda po povodu bolezni L.N. Tolstogo," *Russkoe slovo*, 5 November 1910. Emphasis in the original.

⁴⁷ Lev Aleksandrovich Tikhomirov, "Iz dnevnika L. Tikhomirova," *Krasnyi arkhiv* 1936 (74), 162–191, on 180.

⁴⁸ Later to become metropolitan of Kiev, and finally, after the 1917 revolution, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church in exile.

⁴⁹ Antonii (Khrapovitskii), "V chem prodolzhalo otrazhat'sia vliianie pravoslaviia na posledniia proizvedeniia gr. L.N. Tolstogo?", lecture given on 22 November 1910. Quoted by *Zhizneopisanie i tvoreniia blazhenneishago Antonii, Mitropolita Kievskago i Galickago v 17 tomakh* (N.Y.: izd. Sviato-Troitskago monastyrja, 1978) vol. 14, 247–268, on 268. In all likelihood, Antonii himself was one of the priests in this group. See Nikolai Dmitrievich Kuznetsov, "Vopros o molitve za gr. L.N. Tolstogo," *Otdykh khristianina* 1913 no. 5, 881–923, on 891.

⁵⁰ Kuznetsov, "Vopros o molitve", 891.

⁵¹ Ibid., 892–3.

⁵² *Poslednie dni L'va Nikolaevicha Tolstogo* (St.Pb., 1910), 98.

⁵³ Ibid., iv.

⁵⁴ Antonii (Khrapovitskii), "V chem prodolzhalo", 269.

⁵⁵ *Smert' Tolstogo*, 280.

⁵⁶ Meilakh, *Uchod*, 316.

⁵⁷ *Iz materialov*, 353.

⁵⁸ Nikolai Dmitrievich Tal'berg, "Smert' gr. L.N. Tolstogo po offitsial'nym doneseniiam," *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* 1956 no. 10, 5–7.

⁵⁹ Petrov, *Otluchenie*, 100.

⁶⁰ "L.N. Tolstoi (iz nashego korrespondenta)," *Novoe vremia*, 10 November 1910. Other sources give much lower estimate of the number of mourners, down to 3 000.

⁶¹ Wilson, *Tolstoy*, 517.

- ⁶² N. Varzhanskii, "Po povodu 'otpevaniia' L.N.Tolstogo," *Missionerskoe obozrenie* 1913 no. 4, 672–678, on 672; Aleksandr Bronzov, "Drug ili vrag Khristov – Tolstoi?" *Khristianskoe chtenie* 1912 no. 3, 330–349, no. 4, 463–482, on 482; Lev Katanskii (pseud.), *Tolstovskii vopros* (St.Pb.: no year or publisher given), 3.
- ⁶³ Sofia Andreevna Tolstaia, *Dnevnik*, I–II (Moscow, 1978), vol. 2, 355.
- ⁶⁴ "Zmeia na mogile Tolstogo," reprinted in *Tul'skie eparkhial'nye vedomosti* 1911 no. 47–48, 767–769; and in *Tomskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti* 1911 no. 22, 1196–1197.
- ⁶⁵ Varzhanskii, "Po povodu otpevaniia", 672.
- ⁶⁶ Sergei Glagolev, "Otsutstvie religioznago obrazovaniia v sovremennom obshchestve," *Bogoslovskii vestnik* 1912 no. 10, 273–296.
- ⁶⁷ Sofia Andreevna Tolstaia, "Pravoslavnaia sluzhba na mogile Tolstogo. (Pis'mo v redaktsiiu)," *Russkoe slovo* 28 December 1912.
- ⁶⁸ Sofia Tolstaia, *Dnevnik*, vol. 2, 383.
- ⁶⁹ Valentin Fedorovich Bulgakov, "V osiroteloi Iasnoi Poliane," *Golos minuvshago na chuzhoi storone*, 1926 no. 3, 107–173, on 120.
- ⁷⁰ Aleksandr Savvich Pankratov, "Na mogile Tolstogo," *Russkoe slovo* 21 December 1912.
- ⁷¹ Tolstaia, "Pravoslavnaia sluzhba".
- ⁷² P. Kraniev, *Otpevanie" grafa L.N. Tolstogo s evangel'skoi i Tserkovnoi tochki zreniia. (Po povodu sovremennoi gazetnoi shumikhi)* (Riazan', 1913), 7.
- ⁷³ Varzhanskii, "Po povodu 'otpevaniia'", 672, where the priest's letter is reprinted in full.
- ⁷⁴ B., "Po povodu otpevaniia, sovershennago na mogile L.N. Tolstogo," *Tserkovno-obshchestvennyi vestnik*, 1913 no. 8, 11–13.
- ⁷⁵ Anton Vladimirovich Kartashev, "Molitva o Tolstom," *Russkoe slovo* 3 January 1913.
- ⁷⁶ Father D.I. Romashkov, *O dukhovnoi smerti i dukhovnom voskresenii grafa L.N. Tolstogo*, (Moscow, 1902) 54–55.
- ⁷⁷ *The Spiritual regulation of Peter the Great*, trans. and ed. Alexander V. Muller (Seattle, 1972), 6
- ⁷⁸ A. V. Kartashev, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi tserkvi* (Paris 1959), 2:353